



El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

PRESS RELEASE

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El Monte Union Engineering Program Debuts with African Wildcat Visit

Wildlife Learning Center presents endangered serval to 50 students at Mountain View High School

EL MONTE – A special visit by an African wildcat made the first day of the 2018-19 school year extra special for 50 Mountain View High School students who are members of the school’s inaugural Zoo Crew: Engineers Gone Wild! program, an engineering pathway that focuses on animal protection and preservation.

Students packed into the school’s Media Center to hear Wildlife Learning Center representatives explain the characteristics and behaviors of the exotic animal they were about to meet – the serval, a long-legged, long-eared wildcat found mostly in the African Savanna. The serval is the first animal the ninth- and 10th-grade students encountered as part of the new Zoo Crew program.

“It was really informative and entertaining,” said Judy Ung, a 10th-grader who plans to major in biology or engineering in college.

Designed to be a gender-neutral career technical education pathway, Zoo Crew was launched this year thanks to a grant from the California Department of Education and support from other donors and industry partners. The program will provide students with the opportunity to explore architectural design and engineering – disciplines that students often find daunting and challenging.

“We wanted to create a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) program that would interest all students, from those who want to be future engineers to those who have an interest, but are hesitant to take that leap,” said Mountain View engineering teacher Lee Porter, who will lead the program. “Zoo Crew, which combines a love of animals with principles of engineering and environmental science, will change our students’ outlook on what it means to be a scientist.”

Students in the program will be introduced to the four major branches of engineering and learn how each branch relates to the health and well-being of animals in the wild.

Lessons will focus on different aspects of animal protection and challenge students to create solutions that protect biodiversity while connecting people with wildlife. Students can explore designing and building

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structures such as a feral dog shelter, zoo habitat or a villa for a chinchilla. They will use Autodesk Inventor and 3D printers to become proficient at 2-D and 3-D computer-aided design (CAD) and animation.

Year one of the program will concentrate on basic engineering principles as students gradually build their skills. Students will listen to guest speakers, take field trips to the Los Angeles and San Diego zoos, and observe animals in the classroom.

The following year will be more challenging, incorporating physics and animatronics as students engage in more complex projects to preserve and protect wildlife. This includes maintaining the delicate balance between the needs of commuters and the needs of animals crossing roads in search of food and shelter.

"I joined Zoo Crew because I wanted to explore my career options," said 10th-grade student Brianna Lopez. "I want to learn more about how to help animals and people in everyday life."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

082318_EMUHSD_ZOOCREW1: Mountain View High Schools students, members of the new Zoo Crew engineering program, listen to a Wildlife Learning Center representative explain the characteristics of the serval, a long-legged, long-eared African wildcat, on the first day of school on Aug. 20. The serval is the first animal the ninth- and 10th-grade students encountered as part of the program.

082318_EMUHSD_ZOOCREW2: The serval is just one of many animals Mountain View High School students in the Zoo Crew: Engineers Gone Wild! program will encounter as they learn about engineering, architectural design and different aspects of animal welfare and conservation.

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The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.